

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS COLOMBO 001308

SIPDIS

USDOC FOR 4530/MAC/ANESA/OSA
EMBASSIES FOR FCS OFFICES

E.O 12958:N/A

TAGS: [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [MV](#) [ECONOMICS](#)

SUBJECT: IMI - NEW CELLULAR MOBILE NETWORK, MALDIVES

1. Summary. The Government of the Republic of Maldives plans to liberalize the cellular network and invite a second operator. This will present business opportunities to US telecommunications service providers and equipment manufacturers. End Summary.

2. The Government of the Republic of Maldives (GORM) plans to liberalize the mobile telephone network, by issuing a license to a second mobile provider. The Telecommunications Authority of Maldives (TAM) has recently called for expressions of interest from interested parties. US based TMG Inc has been selected to provide consultancy services on liberalization of the mobile network.

3. TAM hopes to issue a technology neutral license to a cellular mobile operator for an initial period of 15 years, for a onetime pre-determined license fee. The selected provider will be expected to meet certain population and geographic coverage. Prospective bidders need to have experience in operating mobile phone facilities utilizing internationally approved digital communication technologies, with at least 100,000 subscribers in service. They should also have access to funds needed to construct and operate a digital mobile network.

4. Background: Telecommunications facilities are well developed in Capital Male' and at the tourist resorts. All 200 inhabited islands of the country have access to telephone services, but in many cases it is comprised of a single public pay phone for all residents of the island. Mobile phone usage is increasing rapidly. There are over 66,000 mobile phone users in the Maldives, compared to 30,000 landlines. Mobile phone services are available in Male, 85 inhabited islands and in all resort islands.

5. Currently, Dhiraagu, a joint venture between the Government and Cable & Wireless of UK, is the sole telecommunications service provider in Maldives. Dhiraagu provides Internet services, and GSM mobile and international roaming services. Dhiraagu's monopoly over Internet services will end soon when a newly licensed provider starts operations.

6. Further information regarding this business opportunity can be obtained from Mr. Mohamed Amir, Chief Executive Officer

Telecommunications Authority of Maldives
Telecom Building
Male
Republic of Maldives
Phone: 960-323344
Fax: 960-320000
Email: mobile@tam.gov.mv
Internet: www.tam.gov.mv
ENTWISTLE